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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES
DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US)
CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371**

004900-200

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (If known, see 37 C.F.R. 1.5)

09/889957

INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.
PCT/FR00/00166

INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE
25 January 2000

PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED
25 January 1999

TITLE OF INVENTION
METHOD AND INSTALLATION FOR SEPARATING AND PURIFYING DIPHENOLS IN THE
PHENOL AND PHENOL DERIVATIVES INDUSTRY

APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US
Jacques BOURDON; Daniel CLERIN

Applicant herewith submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

- 1. This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
- 2. This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.
- 3. This is an express request to begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the applicable time limit set in 35 U.S.C. 371(b) and the PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).
- 4. A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.
- 5. A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2))
 - a. is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US)
- 6. A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).
- 7. Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))
 - a. are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
 - b. have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
 - c. have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
 - d. have not been made and will not be made.
- 8. A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).
- 9. An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).
- 10. A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

Items 11. to 16. below concern other document(s) or information included:

- 11. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98.
- 12. An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.
- 13. A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
 - A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment.
- 14. A substitute specification.
- 15. A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.
- 16. Other items or information:

09/889957

U.S. APPLICATION NO (If known) / S 37 C (1) (30)	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO PCT/FROO/00166	ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NUMBER 004900-200
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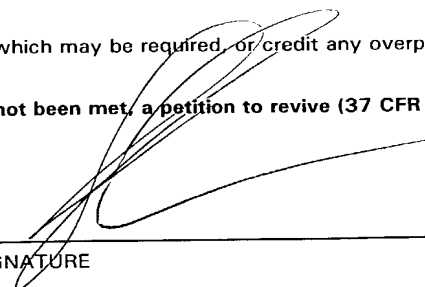
<p>17. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The following fees are submitted:</p> <p>Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5)):</p> <p>Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO and International Search Report not prepared by the EPO or JPO \$1,000.00 (960)</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but International Search Report prepared by the EPO or JPO \$860.00 (970)</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) not paid to USPTO but international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO \$710.00 (958)</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but all claims did not satisfy provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$690.00 (956)</p> <p>International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(1)-(4) \$100.00 (962)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =</p> <p>Surcharge of \$130.00 (154) for furnishing the oath or declaration later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(e)). 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width:20%;">Claims</th> <th style="width:20%;">Number Filed</th> <th style="width:20%;">Number Extra</th> <th style="width:20%;">Rate</th> <th style="width:10%;"></th> <th style="width:10%;"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total Claims</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20 - 20 =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X \$18.00 (966)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">--</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Independent Claims</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1 - 3 =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X \$80.00 (964)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">--</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3">Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">+ \$270.00 (968)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: right;">TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">860.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Reduction for 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable (see below).</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: right;">SUBTOTAL =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">860.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Processing fee of \$130.00 (156) for furnishing the English translation later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)). 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: right;">TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">860.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 (581) per property +</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: right;">TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">860.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Amount to be:</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">refunded</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">charged</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$</td> </tr> </tbody></table>	Claims	Number Filed	Number Extra	Rate			Total Claims	20 - 20 =	0	X \$18.00 (966)	\$	--	Independent Claims	1 - 3 =	0	X \$80.00 (964)	\$	--	Multiple dependent claim(s) (if applicable)			+ \$270.00 (968)	\$		TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =				\$	860.00	Reduction for 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable (see below).				\$	-	SUBTOTAL =				\$	860.00	Processing fee of \$130.00 (156) for furnishing the English translation later than months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)). 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 30 <input type="checkbox"/>				\$		TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =				\$	860.00	Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31). \$40.00 (581) per property +				\$		TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =				\$	860.00					Amount to be:						refunded	\$					charged	\$	<p>CALCULATIONS</p> <p style="font-size: small;">PTO USE ONLY</p>
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- a. Small entity status is hereby claimed.
- b. A check in the amount of \$ 860.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.
- c. Please charge my Deposit Account No. 02-4800 in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the above fees. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- d. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-4800. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed and granted to restore the application to pending status.

SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

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 P.O. Box 1404
 Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
 (703) 836-6620



 SIGNATURE
Teresa Stanek Rea

 NAME
30,427

 REGISTRATION NUMBER

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of)
)
Jacques BOURDON et al.) Group Art Unit: Unassigned
)
Application No.: Unassigned) Examiner: Unassigned
(Corresponds to PCT/FR00/00166)
)
International Filing Date: 25 January 2000)
)
For: METHOD AND INSTALLATION OR)
SEPARATING AND PURIFYING)
DIPHENOLS IN THE PHENOL AND)
PHENOL DERIVATIVES INDUSTRY)

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

BOX PCT
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above-captioned application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

Kindly replace claims 1-11 and 13-20 as follows.

1. (Amended) A process for separation and purification of a crude mixture comprising hydroquinone and resorcinol, optionally tars, and optionally catechol, in which process the crude mixture is first subjected to a series of distillation stages comprising:

- (i) optionally distilling in stage (I) [designed] to produce catechol as a distillation top product,
- (ii) obtaining the distillation bottom product from (i) or the crude mixture in the absence of stage (I) to a distillation stage (II) designed to produce, as

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200

distillation a top product, a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising resorcinol and hydroquinone,

- (iii) subjecting the distillation bottom product obtained from (ii) to a distillation stage (III) designed to produce, as a distillation top product, a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising hydroquinone and resorcinol,

and then subjecting the hydroquinone-rich fraction and/or the resorcinol-rich fraction to a refining stage (IV or V) in order to extract the hydroquinone and/or the resorcinol respectively.

2. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein stage (I), when it is present, or stage (II) is preceded by at least one preliminary detarring stage (1, 1') designed to produce, as a bottom product, a tar-rich fraction and, as a top product, a detarred fraction which is used to feed stage (I) or stage (II).

3. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein two predistillation stages (1, 1') are provided, the tar-rich bottom fraction from the first (1) being used to feed the second (1') and the two detarred top fractions being used to feed stage (I) or (II).

4. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein stage (II) is designed to result in a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising:

- from 75 to 95 % resorcinol, and
- from 5 to 25 % hydroquinone.

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200

5. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein stage (III) is designed to result in a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising:
- from 75 to 98 % hydroquinone, and
 - from 2 to 25 % resorcinol.
6. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the refining of the rich fractions is carried out on drainers.
7. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the distillation column (I) has the following specifications:
- number of theoretical stages: from 5 to 40; and
 - reflux ratio R of between 1 and 10.
8. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the distillation column (II) has the following specifications:
- number of theoretical stages: from 10 to 85; and
 - reflux ratio R of between 1 and 35.
9. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the distillation column (III) is a scraped falling film device or a distillation column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 1 to 10, and
- reflux ratio R of between 0.5 and 5.

10. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the detarring column or columns (1, 1') is/are scraped falling film devices.

11. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the crude mixture comprises, with respect to the total mixture:

- from 20 to 60% by weight of hydroquinone,
- from 2 to 20% by weight of resorcinol,
- from 0 to 20% by weight of catechol, and
- the remainder being formed of various compounds comprising tars.

13. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, which additionally comprises:

- a detarring column (1) designed to produce, at the column top, a detarred fraction and, at the bottom of the column, a tar-rich fraction
- optionally at least one other distillation column (11) fed with the tar-rich fraction originating from the preceding column (1) and designed to produce, at the column top, a detarred fraction and, at the bottom, a tar-rich fraction, the top fraction or fractions of these columns being used to feed column (I) or (II).

14. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the column (II) is designed to result in a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising:

- from 75 to 95% resorcinol, and
- from 5 to 25% hydroquinone.

15. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the column (III) is designed to result in a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising:

- from 75 to 98% hydroquinone, and
- from 2 to 25% resorcinol.

16. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the refining device or devices are drainers.

17. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the distillation column (I) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 5 to 40; and
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 10.

18. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the distillation column (II) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 10 to 85[, preferably from 15 to 40; and
reflux ratio R of between 1 and 35.

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200

19. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the distillation column (III) is a scraped falling film device or a distillation column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 1 to 10, and
- reflux ratio R of between 0.5 and 5.

20. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, wherein the detarring column or columns (1, 1') is/are scraped falling film devices.

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendments are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions concerning the subject application, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 

Teresa Stanek Rea
Registration No. 30,427

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
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Date: July 25, 2001

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated July 25, 2001

1. (Amended) A process for separation and purification of a crude mixture comprising hydroquinone and resorcinol, optionally tars, and optionally catechol, in which process the crude mixture is first [of all] subjected to a series of distillation stages comprising:

- (i) [an optional distillation] optionally distilling in stage (I) [designed] to produce catechol as a distillation top product,
- (ii) obtaining the distillation bottom product [obtained under] from (i) or the crude mixture in the absence of stage (I) [is subjected] to a distillation stage (II) designed to produce, as distillation a top product, a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising resorcinol[, essentially,] and hydroquinone,
- (iii) subjecting the distillation bottom product obtained [under] from (ii) [is subjected] to a distillation stage (III) designed to produce, as a distillation top product, a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising hydroquinone[, essentially,] and resorcinol,

and then subjecting the hydroquinone-rich fraction and/or the resorcinol-rich fraction [is/are subjected] to a refining stage (IV or V) in order to extract the hydroquinone and/or the resorcinol respectively.

2. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein stage (I), when it is present, or stage (II) is preceded by at least one preliminary detarring stage (1, 1') designed to produce, as a bottom product, a tar-rich fraction and, as a top product, a detarred fraction which is used to feed stage (I) or stage (II).

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200
Mark-up of Claims - Page 3 of 3

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated July 25, 2001

7. (Amended) The process as claimed in [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (I) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 5 to 40[, preferably from 10 to 30]; and
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 10[, preferably between 2 and 5].

8. (Amended) The process as claimed in [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (II) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 10 to 85[, preferably from 15 to 40]; and
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 35[, preferably between 5 and 25].

9. (Amended) The process as claimed in [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (III) is a scraped falling film device or a distillation column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 1 to 10[, preferably from 1 to 5], and
- reflux ratio R of between 0.5 and 5[, preferably between 1 and 2].

10. (Amended) The process as claimed in [any one of claims 1 to 6] claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the detarring column or columns (1, 1') is/are scraped falling film devices.

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200
Mark-up of Claims - Page 4 of 4

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated July 25, 2001

11. (Amended) The process as claimed in [any one of claims 1 to 10] claim 1, [characterized in that] wherein the crude mixture comprises, with respect to the total mixture:

- from 20 to 60%[, in particular from 30 to 50%,] by weight of hydroquinone,
- from 2 to 20%[, in particular from 2 to 15%,] by weight of resorcinol,
- from 0 to 20%[, in particular from 5 to 15%,] by weight of catechol, and
- the remainder being formed of various compounds[, essentially] comprising tars.

13. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12, [characterized in that it] which additionally comprises:

- a detarring column (1) designed to produce, at the column top, a detarred fraction and, at the bottom of the column, a tar-rich fraction
 - optionally at least one other distillation column (11) fed with the tar-rich fraction originating from the preceding column (1) and designed to produce, at the column top, a detarred fraction and, at the bottom, a tar-rich fraction,
- the top fraction or fractions of these columns being used to feed column (I) or (II).

14. (Amended) The plant as claimed in claim 12 [or 13], [characterized in that] wherein the column (II) is designed to result in a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising:

- from 75 to 95%[, preferably from 85 to 92%, of] resorcinol, and
- from 5 to 25%[, preferably from 8 to 15%, of] hydroquinone.

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200
Mark-up of Claims - Page 5 of 5

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated July 25, 2001

15. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 14] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the column (III) is designed to result in a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising:

- from 75 to 98%[, preferably from 85 to 97.5%, of] hydroquinone, and
- from 2 to 25%[, preferably from 2.5 to 15%, of] resorcinol.

16. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 15] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the refining device or -devices are drainers.

17. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 16] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (I) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 5 to 40[, preferably from 10 to 30]; and
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 10[, preferably between 2 and 5].

18. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 17] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (II) has the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 10 to 85[, preferably from 15 to 40; and
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 35[, preferably between 5 and 25].

Application No. Unassigned
Attorney's Docket No. 004900-200
Mark-up of Claims - Page 6 of 6

Attachment to Preliminary Amendment dated July 25, 2001

19. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 18] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the distillation column (III) is a scraped falling film device or a distillation column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 1 to 10[, preferably from 1 to 5], and
- reflux ratio R of between 0.5 and 5[, preferably between 1 and 2].

20. (Amended) The plant as claimed in [any one of claims 12 to 19] claim 12, [characterized in that] wherein the detarring column or columns (1, 1') is/are scraped falling film devices.

filtration and for drying, and optionally for reprocessing or recycling the solvent.

An object of the present invention, which relates in particular to the separation and the purification of diphenols in the phenol and phenol derivatives industry, is to provide an appropriate method and plant which make it possible to separate and to purify, under favorable economical conditions, hydroquinone and resorcinol from a crude mixture.

Another object of the invention is to make possible the separation and the purification of first hydroquinone and secondly resorcinol from a crude mixture comprising other compounds, in particular tars, and/or optionally catechol, and also to separate and purify the catechol optionally present.

Another object of the invention is to provide such a process which can be operated largely continuously.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide such a process and plant which make it possible to obtain hydroquinone, resorcinol and catechol having a high purity, in particular of greater than 98%, preferably than 99%, indeed even greater than or equal to 99.5%.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide such a process which does not require the use of a third solvent.

These objects are achieved in accordance with the invention by a process for the purification of a crude mixture comprising hydroquinone and resorcinol, optionally tars, and optionally catechol, in which process the crude mixture is subjected to a series of distillation stages, preferably carried out continuously, comprising:

- (i) an optional first distillation stage (I) designed to produce catechol as distillation top product; this stage is carried out when the crude mixture comprises catechol, in particular

- from 20 to 60%, in particular from 30 to 50%, by weight of hydroquinone,
- from 2 to 20%, in particular from 2 to 15%, by weight of resorcinol,
- 5 - from 0 to 20%, in particular from 5 to 15%, by weight of catechol,
- the remainder being formed of various compounds, essentially tars.

The "detarring" distillation stages (1, 1') can
 10 be carried out with scraped falling film devices of conventional design or short path devices. However, the use of multistage columns is not ruled out (see, e.g., column (III)). The aim is simply to remove as much as possible of the tars without a significant loss of the
 15 desired compounds.

If stages (1 and 1') are not provided, it is preferable to use columns (I) and (II) with antifouling packings in order to limit the fouling thereof by the tars. Such packings are fully known to a person skilled
 20 in the art.

Stage (I) is targeted simply at extracting the catechol and thus at obtaining, as top product, catechol with a purity which is as high as possible. The aim in particular is to obtain a fraction
 25 comprising at least 98%, preferably at least 99%, of catechol.

The term "rich" as used above for stages (II) and (III) is understood to mean that the compound targeted is the major component, the other compound
 30 being a minor component but present in a sufficient amount to subsequently make possible the refining. A person skilled in the art is entirely in a position to determine by routine tests the ranges of ratios, basing himself on the crystallization curve of a resorcinol/
 35 hydroquinone mixture, in order to determine the ratios corresponding to the range of the eutectics. From this information, by varying the operating parameters of the columns, it is possible to achieve conditions such that

the rich fractions have a ratio which appears on either side of this range, as is known per se, which will allow the subsequent implementation of the refining.

5 The operating conditions of stages (II) and (III) are thus related. Each is targeted at the production, as distillation top product (as column top product), of a hydroquinone/resorcinol mixture which is compatible with the subsequent refining stage.

10 It is thus preferable for stage (III) to result in a mixture comprising:

- from 75 to 95%, preferably from 85 to 92%, of resorcinol,
- from 5 to 25%, preferably from 8 to 15%, of hydroquinone.

15 (Possible residues of other compounds, e.g. catechol, which remain minor components, are not taken into account).

20 These operating conditions make it possible to ensure, during stage (III), the production as distillation top product of a mixture comprising in particular:

- from 75 to 98%, preferably from 85 to 97.5%, of hydroquinone,
- from 2 to 25%, preferably from 2.5 to 15%, of resorcinol.

25 (Here again, possible residues of other compounds which may be present in negligible amounts are not taken into account).

30 From this information, a person skilled in the art is fully in a position to choose the means to be employed according to the starting mixture. The following should simply be noted. The size (in particular the diameter) of the distillation columns depends on the circulating stream and on the internal
 35 pressure. They will thus be dimensioned mainly according to the flow rate of the mixture to be treated. The internal parameter which is the number of theoretical stages is determined in particular by the

composition (ratios) of the entering mixture and the purity or the composition of the mixture which has to be obtained as distillation top product and as distillation bottom product. It will be specified that the columns may without distinction be packed with plates or with stacked packing, as is fully known to a person skilled in the art. The plant having been determined, a person skilled in the art adjusts the operating parameters of the columns.

Thus, the distillation column (I) can advantageously but not limitingly be a column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 5 to 40, preferably from 10 to 30;
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 10, preferably between 2 and 5.

The distillation column (II) can advantageously but not limitingly be a column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 10 to 85, preferably from 15 to 40,
- reflux ratio R of between 1 and 35, preferably between 5 and 25.

The distillation column (III) can very simply be a column of type (1) or alternatively a column having the following specifications:

- number of theoretical stages: from 1 to 10, preferably from 1 to 5,
- reflux ratio R of between 0.5 and 5, preferably between 1 and 2.

The refining is carried out batchwise using devices which make possible liquid/solid separation (draining, zone melting) and which are dimensioned according to the volume to be treated and their number. The choice of the type of device is not critical either. They can, for example, be conventional drainers or other refining devices, for example those sold under the name Proapt (registered trademark). It is possible,

for example, to use drainers of the type with a vertical cylindrical tubular exchanger.

The treatment of the rich fractions in these devices is carried out essentially according to the
5 four following phases:

- phase 1 corresponds to the slow crystallization of the charged mixture
- phase 2 corresponds to the cold draining of the eutectic (resorcinol and hydroquinone mixture)
- 10 - phase 3 corresponds to the hot draining recovered during the reheating phase until the desired purity is obtained
- phase 4 corresponds to the melting-recovery of the pure product.

15 The production of fractions with substantially constant compositions also makes it possible to automate the progress of this refining.

The resorcinol-rich fraction is conveyed to one or more refining device(s). Before phase 1, the device
20 is heated above the melting point of resorcinol (11°C), i.e., for example, between 115 and 120°C.

During phase 1, the body of material is cooled, e.g. to a temperature of between 40 and 90°C, over several hours, e.g. over from 5 to 15 h, which results
25 in the slow crystallization of the charged mixture.

After phase 1, the product which has remained liquid is withdrawn from the device (phase 2) before passing to phase 3.

Phase 3 consists of the slow reheating of the refining device, optionally begun during phase 2, e.g.
30 up to a temperature of between 109 and 111°C, over several hours, e.g. over from 8 to 15 h. The end of phase 3, which conditions the purity of the product, can be determined either by measuring the
35 crystallization point or by any other physiochemical analytical technique.

Phase 4 provides for heating of the device to a temperature greater than 115°C, so as to melt the

resorcinol, which is withdrawn in the molten state.

The hydroquinone-rich fractions are treated in the same way. The treatment follows the same phases, apart from the heating/cooling temperatures and times.

5 By way of example:

- preheating between 175 and 180°C
- phase 1, cooling between 90 and 130°C
- phase 1, duration between 5 and 15 h
- phase 3, heating between 170 and 173°C
- 10 - phase 3, duration between 8 and 24 h
- phase 4, heating above 178°C.

The eutectic fractions recovered during the refining can be recycled as a mixture or separately with the hot drainings, preferably in stages (II) and/or (III). It is possible to be induced to recycle them in stage (I), if need be.

Another subject matter of the present invention is a plant which makes possible the implementation of the process described above, comprising:

- 20 (i) an optional distillation column (I) designed to produce catechol at the column top,
- (ii) a distillation column (II), the inlet of which is connected to the bottom of column (I) or receives the crude mixture in the absence of column (I), this column (II) being designed to produce, at the column top, a resorcinol-rich fraction comprising resorcinol, essentially, and hydroquinone,
- 25 (iii) a distillation column (III), the inlet of which is connected to the bottom of column (II), this column (III) being designed to produce, at the column top, a hydroquinone-rich fraction comprising hydroquinone, essentially, and resorcinol,
- 30 (iv) one or more refining devices (IV, V) for providing for the refining of the hydroquinone-rich fraction and/or the
- 35

12.75 kg/h

- approximately 15% catechol, i.e. approximately 3.8 kg/h
- approximately 10% resorcinol, i.e. approximately 2.55 kg/h
- approximately 25% tars, i.e. approximately 6.4 kg/h.

A flow rate of approximately 3.8 kg/h is obtained at the column top, which flow rate comprises:

- approximately 99.5% catechol
- approximately 800 ppm hydroquinone
- approximately 40 ppm resorcinol.

A flow rate of approximately 21.7 kg/h is obtained at the column bottom, which flow rate comprises:

- approximately 58.9% hydroquinone (approximately 12.75 kg/h)
- approximately 11.7% resorcinol (approximately 2.55 kg/h)
- approximately 180 ppm catechol
- approximately 29.4% tars (approximately 6.4 kg/h).

2nd Distillation column (II):

n = 30

R = 10

Column top temperature: 210°C

Pressure: = 100 mmHg, i.e. 13 332 Pa.

It is fed continuously with the bottom product from the 1st column at a flow rate of approximately 21.7 kg/h.

A flow rate of approximately 2.56 kg/h of a resorcinol-rich fraction is obtained at the top, which fraction comprises:

- approximately 90% resorcinol (approximately 2.3 kg/h)
- approximately 10% hydroquinone (approximately 0.26 kg/h,
- approximately 1 200 ppm catechol.

A flow rate of approximately 19.14 kg/h of a

mixture is obtained at the bottom, which mixture comprises:

- approximately 65.3% hydroquinone (approximately 12.49 kg/h)
- 5 - approximately 1.3% resorcinol (approximately 0.25 kg/h)
- approximately 33.4% tars (approximately 6.4 kg/h).

3rd (Distillation) detarring column (III):

10 Detarring column: scraped falling film device
 Column top temperature: 217°C
 Pressure: 100 mmHg, i.e. 13 332 Pa.

This column is fed continuously with the bottom product from the 2nd column at a flow rate of
 15 approximately 19.14 kg/h

A flow rate of approximately 9.64 kg/h of a hydroquinone-rich fraction is obtained at the top, which fraction comprises:

- approximately 97.4% hydroquinone (approximately 20 9.39 kg/h)
- approximately 2.6% resorcinol (approximately 0.25 kg/h)

A flow rate of approximately 9.5 kg/h of a mixture is obtained at the column bottom, which mixture
 25 comprises:

- approximately 32.6% hydroquinone (approximately 3.1 kg/h)
- approximately 67.4% tars (approximately 6.4 kg/h).

The column bottom product can optionally be
 30 redistilled on a detarring column.

Refining:

The refining makes it possible to obtain the pure products from the rich fractions. Drainers of the
 35 type with a vertical cylindrical tubular exchanger were used. Similar results will be obtained with other types of devices.

The operating method is as follows:

a) for the hydroquinone-rich fraction:

- Charging: before the charging of approximately 180 kg of hydroquinone-rich fractions, the drainer (V) is preheated to a temperature greater than the melting point of hydroquinone, in this instance to approximately 180°C.
- Cooling: the body of material is slowly cooled by circulation of water to a temperature of approximately 120°C (cooling time approximately 10 h).
- Recovery of the eutectic fraction: the eutectic fraction, which is also known as cold drainings, corresponds to the uncrystallized part of the mixture at the end of cooling and is a mixture of resorcinol and hydroquinone. In the case of these drainings, this fraction can be recovered by simple gravimetric flow and collected in a tank provided for this purpose. This phase lasts approximately 12 hours and takes place with slow reheating of the drainer.
- The reheating of the drainer is continued in order to carry out the hot draining phase. The end of the phase of recovery of the hot drainings is determined by the measurement of the crystallization point of the product which seeps out during this heating phase. This fraction is recovered by simple gravimetric flow and is collected in a tank provided for this purpose. This fraction can either be recycled to the following refining operation or mixed with the cold draining fraction and recycled to the distillation.
- Recovery of the pure hydroquinone: when the crystallization point (171°C) is reached, the flow of the hot drainings is interrupted and the drainer is heated to a temperature of 180°C in order to melt all the hydroquinone. Approximately 65 kg of hydroquinone are recovered with an assay of greater than or equal to 99.5%.

b) For the resorcinol-rich fraction: the processing is carried out in the same way as under a) with the drainer (IV), apart from the essential difference that this time it is the melting temperature of resorcinol which is taken into account, which temperature is 111°C. The heating temperatures are consequently modified.

Charging temperature 120°C
 Cooling to 60°C over approximately 10 h

10 Recovery of the cold draining fraction over approximately 10 h

Reheating from 60 to 110.5°C, the end of this reheating being determined by the measurement of the crystallization point, which determines the final

15 purity of the product.

Heating to 120°C in order to recover the resorcinol: 65 kg with a purity of greater than or equal to 99%.

EXAMPLE 2: (Figure 2)

20 In comparison with example 1, two detarring columns (1 and 1') are added upstream of the distillation column (I) to remove at the start the tars present. The first (1) of these columns is fed with the mixture to be treated and the second (1') with the

25 bottom product from the preceding column (1). The streams originating from the two column tops feed the 1st column (I) according to example 1.

Detarring columns

Scraped falling film devices

30 Column top temperature: 174°C

Pressure: 10 mmHg, i.e. 1 333.2 Pa.

The column (1) is fed continuously with a flow rate of 35 kg/h with a mixture to be treated comprising:

- 35 - approximately 45% hydroquinone, i.e. approximately 15.75 kg/h
- approximately 7% catechol, i.e. approximately 2.45 kg/h

Distillation column (II):

n = 30

R = 10

Column top temperature: 170°C

5 Pressure: 10 mmHg, i.e. 1 333.2 Pa.

It is fed continuously with the bottom product from the column (I) at a flow rate of approximately 16.45 kg/h.

10 A flow rate of approximately 0.75 kg/h of a resorcinol-rich fraction is obtained at the top, which fraction comprises:

- approximately 0.65 kg/h resorcinol
- approximately 0.1 kg/h hydroquinone
- approximately 1 200 ppm catechol.

15 A flow rate of approximately 15.7 kg/h of a mixture is obtained at the bottom, which mixture comprises:

- approximately 15.2 kg/h hydroquinone
- approximately 0.4 kg/h resorcinol
- 20 - approximately 0.1 kg/h tars.

(Distillation) detarring column (III):

Detarring column: scraped falling film device

Column top temperature: 174.5°C

25 Pressure: 10 mmHg, i.e. 1 333.2 Pa.

This column is fed continuously with the bottom product from the column (II) at a flow rate of approximately 15.7 kg/h.

30 A flow rate of approximately 15.2 kg/h of a hydroquinone-rich fraction is obtained at the top, which fraction comprises:

- approximately 14.8 kg/h hydroquinone
- approximately 0.4 kg/h resorcinol.

35 A flow rate of approximately 0.5 kg/h of a mixture is obtained at the column bottom, which mixture comprises:

- approximately 0.4 kg/h hydroquinone
- approximately 0.1 kg/h tars.

Refining:

The refining is carried out as in example 1.

5 It must be clearly understood that the invention defined by the appended claims is not limited to the specific embodiments indicated in the above description but encompasses the alternative forms thereof which depart neither from the scope nor from the spirit of the present invention.

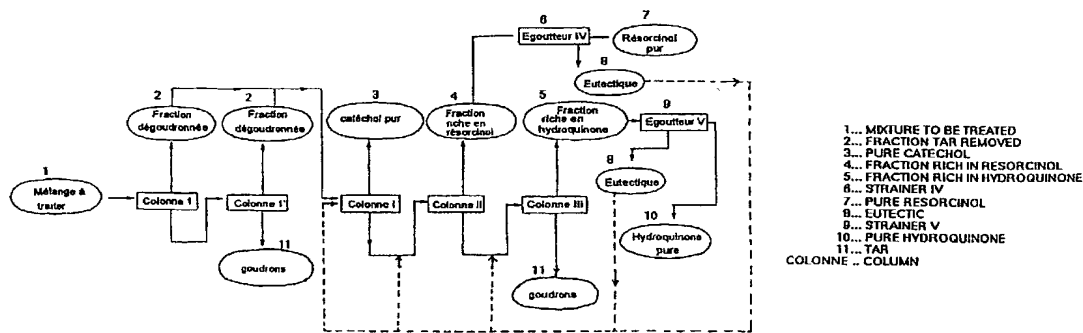


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(54) Title: METHOD AND INSTALLATION FOR SEPARATING AND PURIFYING DIPHENOLS IN THE PHENOL AND PHENOL DERIVATIVES INDUSTRY

(54) Titre: PROCEDE ET INSTALLATION DE SEPARATION ET PURIFICATION DES DIPHENOLS DANS L'INDUSTRIE DU PHENOL ET DE SES DERIVES



(57) Abstract

A method and installation for separating and purifying a crude mixture containing hydroquinone, resorcinol and possibly tars and/or catechol, comprising the following steps: - a possible distillation stage (I) in order to obtain a catechol head, - the foot (1) or crude mixture undergoes distillation (II) in order to obtain a fraction that is rich in resorcinol, - the foot of (II) undergoes distillation (III) in order to obtain a fraction that is rich in hydroquinone, whereupon said rich fractions are refined (IV or V). Preferably, one or several stages in which tar is removed (I, I') precede stage (I) or (II).

(57) Abrégé

Procédé et installation de séparation et purification d'un mélange brut contenant hydroquinone, résorcinol, éventuellement goudrons et/ou catéchol, comprenant: une éventuelle étape de distillation (I) conçue pour obtenir du catéchol en tête; le pied de (I), ou le mélange brut, est soumis à une étape de distillation (II) conçue pour obtenir en tête une fraction riche en résorcinol; le pied de (II) est soumis à une étape de distillation (III) conçue pour obtenir en tête une fraction riche en hydroquinone, puis on soumet ces fractions riches à du raffinage (IV ou V). On fait de préférence précéder l'étape (I) ou (II) d'une ou plusieurs étapes de dégoudronnage (1, 1').

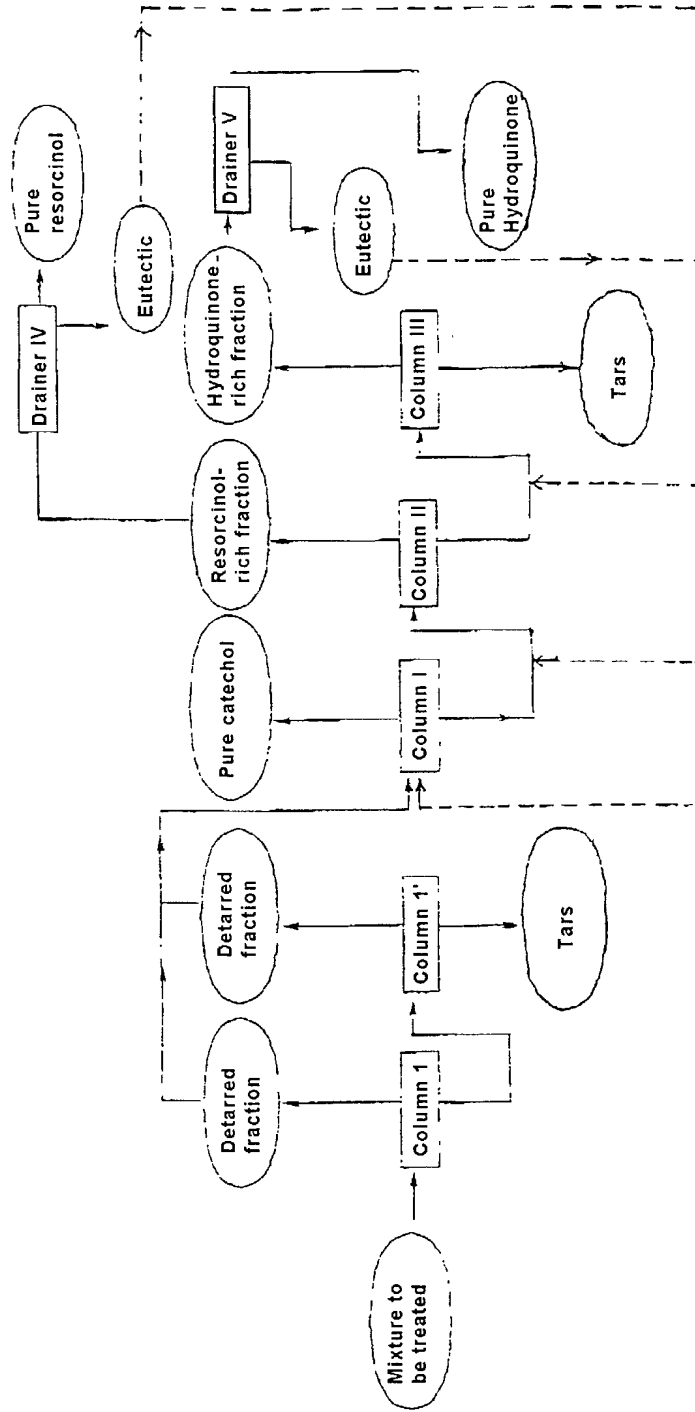


Fig. 2

**COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
FOR UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION**

Attorney's Docket No.

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name;

I BELIEVE I AM THE ORIGINAL, FIRST AND SOLE INVENTOR (if only one name is listed below) OR AN ORIGINAL, FIRST AND JOINT INVENTOR (if more than one name is listed below) OF THE SUBJECT MATTER WHICH IS CLAIMED AND FOR WHICH A PATENT IS SOUGHT ON THE INVENTION ENTITLED:

Method and installation for separating and purifying in the phenol and phenol
derivatives industry

the specification of which

(check one)

is attached hereto;

was filed on January 25, 2000 as

Application No. PCT/FR00/00166

and was amended on _____;
(if applicable)

I HAVE REVIEWED AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THE ABOVE-IDENTIFIED SPECIFICATION, INCLUDING THE CLAIMS, AS AMENDED BY ANY AMENDMENT REFERRED TO ABOVE;

I ACKNOWLEDGE THE DUTY TO DISCLOSE TO THE OFFICE ALL INFORMATION KNOWN TO ME TO BE MATERIAL TO PATENTABILITY AS DEFINED IN TITLE 37, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, Sec. 1.56 (as amended effective March 16, 1992);

I do not know and do not believe the said invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my or our invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my or our invention thereof or more than one year prior to said application; that said invention was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to said application; that said invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of said application in any country foreign to the United States of America on any application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months prior to said application;

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code Sec. 119 and/or Sec. 365 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate as indicated below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate on this invention having a filing date before that of the application(s) on which priority is claimed:

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY	Attorney's Docket No.
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COUNTRY/INTERNATIONAL	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING (day, month, year)	PRIORITY CLAIMED
FRANCE	FR 99 00908	25.01.1999	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

I hereby appoint the following attorneys and agent(s) to prosecute said application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith and to file, prosecute and to transact all business in connection with international applications directed to said invention:

39 William L. Mathis Robert S. Swecker Platon N. Mandros Benton S. Duffett, Jr. Norman H. Stepno Ronald L. Grudziecki Frederick G. Michaud, Jr. Alan E. Kopecki Regis E. Slutter Samuel C. Miller, III Robert G. Mukar George A. Hovanec, Jr. James A. LaBarre E. Joseph Gess	17,337 19,885 22,124 22,030 22,716 24,970 26,003 25,813 26,999 27,360 28,531 28,223 28,632 28,510	R. Danny Huntington Eric H. Weisblatt James W. Peterson Teresa Stanek Rea Robert E. Krebs William C. Rowland T. Gene Dillahunty Patrick C. Keane B. Jefferson Boggs, Jr. William H. Benz Peter K. Skiff Richard J. McGrath Matthew L. Schneider Michael G. Savage	27,903 30,505 26,057 30,427 25,885 30,888 25,423 32,858 32,344 25,952 31,917 29,195 32,814 32,596	Gerald F. Swiss Charles F. Wieland III Bruce T. Wiedner Todd R. Walters Ronni S. Jillions Harold R. Brown III Allen R. Baum Steven M. duBois Brian P. O'Shaughnessy Kenneth B. Leffler Fred W. Hathaway	30,113 33,096 33,815 34,040 31,979 36,341 36,086 35,023 32,747 36,075 32,236
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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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